

Romances by Conrad, Ibanez, George, Rinehart, Leacock, Bowen and Others

Classic Fiction of Our Day Both Comedy and Tragedy

By Willis Fletcher Johnson

The Arrow of Gold

Joseph Conrad's Romance of
Marseilles or Anywhere

THE ARROW OF GOLD. By Joseph Conrad. 12mo. pp. 288. Doubleday, Page & Co.

One of the essential qualities of a classic is universality, and, judged according to that rule, this latest romance of Mr. Conrad's may well lay claim to classic distinction. Beginning with the author's art that the motives, passions and real vitality of the work might well belong to any other scene and any other era in the history of the world. In one sense it is a historical novel since it deals with the Carlist enterprise. But that is as purely a matter of convenience and detail as is the placing of "Hamlet" at Elsinore.

The real gist of the story is not the enterprise of Mills and Blunt in behalf of the Spanish Pretender but the love affair between George and Rita, which grows out of the former only immeasurably to overshadow it. All else is stage setting, though of the most vital and realistic kind. To comprehend the figure the whole story is intensely dramatic in the truest sense of the term. That is to say, it is told in action. Even the elusive psychology of Dona Rita is revealed not in the ordinary analytical fashion, but through her acts and words. The author never has to tell us anything.

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he seen reading it, he will be hanged to a lamp-post.

Loud applause greeted this part of the speech, while the faces of the people to my great astonishment, seemed filled with genuine relief and beamed with unmistakable enthusiasm.

"And now," continued the speaker, "I command you, you dogs, to disperse quietly and go home. Move quickly, aware that you are, or we shall open fire upon you with machine guns."

With a last outburst of cheering the crowd broke and dispersed, like a vast theatre audience.

On just one point would we perhaps take issue with Mr. Leacock. He calls this admirable fooling "impossibilities." Really, is it quite impossible, after what has actually occurred?

Blood and Sand

Blasco Ibanez in His First and Almost Best Work

BLOOD AND SAND. By Vicente Blasco Ibanez. Translated by W. L. George. 12mo. pp. 350. Doubleday, Page & Co.

The same comment must be made upon this gigantic work that we made upon "The Shadow of the Cathedral." Its theme is not of immediate interest to American readers, as was and is that of the "Four Horses of the Apocalypse." We do not have bullfighting in this country, any more than we have Spanish ecclesiasticism. Nevertheless, the nations of the world have grown so close together that each must measurably adopt the epigram of Terence and account itself interested in anything that interests any other nation.

For those, then, who would have an indescribably vivid view of the great national sport of Spain, and of its place in and influence upon Spanish life, this epic is to be commended in the strongest and most unreserved terms. It is both realism and romanticism at their best. The impassioned eloquence of the foreword's song, "Toreador's Anthem," sweeps through every chapter, with the dust and blood of the arena and the roar of the acclaiming multitudes. Not even Ibanez has ever written with more vital spirit with more graphic and dramatic power.

Rejuvenation

The Story of a Man Who Finds Himself

WHILE THERE'S LIFE. By Elmer Montauht. 12mo. pp. 222. Henry Holt & Co.

Hugh d'Eath, an elderly Englishman, a widower and the father of a large family of very dull children, who have managed him the greater part of his life, suddenly runs away. His doctor has told him that he has only a year or so to live, that some mysterious heart trouble will prove his undoing. He is ordered to Naumheim. His eldest and most masterful daughter has intended to accompany him, but at the last moment circumstances intervene, and he starts off alone. He gets no further than London and adventures into the east side. Here life takes on a new meaning; it begins to be real, instead of dull and drab. His youngest daughter, Susie, who is a bit like her father, when the war commences gets alarmed at the reports of the hardships imposed on the English residents of Naumheim, and she also runs away to find her father. Their adventures bring them together, and result in both of them finding love and happiness. The story is well told, and the plot cleverly worked out. Runc, the coster flower girl, is an extremely amusing character.

Love and Tragedy

A MAN FOUR-SQUARE. By William MacLeod Rains. With colored frontispiece. 12mo. pp. 238. Doubleday, Page & Co.

The scenes are laid in the wonderland of the Southwest, where love and fighting loom so large in the elements of life. In this tale they dominate the whole. There are false love and true love, and there are tragedies in cold blood and in hot. All the way through there are a girl who is womanly as she is heroic, and a man who is as loving as he is daring. There is action enough on a single page to fill a whole chapter of some books, and yet the progress of the story is so smooth and coherent that it never seems hurried or overcrowded. It is a book to be read with intense and often with breathless interest, and with the sheer joy that man, the fighting animal, always feels in masterful conflict.

Tales of the Old and the New In This and Other Countries

England and the War

W. L. George's Picture of English Country Life

BLIND ALLEY. By W. L. George. 12mo. pp. 312. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Mr. George is so much the student of life that, while he may be a bit ponderous, he always has something interesting to say. In "Blind Alley" he has given us a painstaking tale of how the war affects the lives of a Sussex family. To Sir Hugh Oakley, the patriarch, it brings a spiritual awakening, a quickening. For his younger daughter, Sylvia, it creates a craze for excitement, that feverish quest, which has been its worst influence on English women. It almost wrecks the life of Monica, the elder daughter, who is beautiful and romantic. Her work in contact with an unscrupulous but attractive man, and her love for him very nearly proves her undoing. In the end she is saved, and profits by her sufferings.

The book is full of a passionate protest against war and vivid pictures of the destruction it has wrought, not in France, but in the lives and hearts of



Bernie Babcock
("Ann Rutledge") J. P. Lippincott Company

the English people. There is a realistic picture of life and work in a munition factory. Mr. George's hand is skilful, and he is a close observer of life, and his book is quite up to the high standard of his other work.

Impossible "Business"

MAID AND WIFE. By Carlton Becher. Illustrated. 12mo. pp. 350. Doubleday, Page & Co.

One wonders where the women who write of the business world get their knowledge, and long to receive them to spend at least a week in the world of finance. This book is not uninteresting, but it is quite impossible. Nothing like it ever happened or ever will happen. Its psychology is asymmetrical, and its knowledge of human nature almost nil. Yet it probably will find its public; it reads well and frequently holds the attention. After all, the world is full of realities; no one longs for the impossible quite so much as the person who is bound by the staid and commonplaces. We have no doubt that many will weep at Sheila's vicissitudes. However, one could hardly recommend "Maid and Wife" for the true student of life as it is.

In Burgundy

SONO. By Gaston Rougemont. Translated by Bernet J. Boyer. 12mo. pp. 272. E. P. Dutton & Co.

We have hitherto commended most favorably upon the enterprise of Messrs. E. P. Dutton & Co. in bringing out a "Library of French Literature," covering provincial France rather than Parisian society. The editorship of the series has been judiciously entrusted to Mr. Boyer, who is a lecturer at the Sorbonne and who himself is translating some of the

Madam Constantia

The Romance of a Prisoner of War in the Revolution (South Carolina)

Edited by JEFFERSON CARTER

THE NEW YORK SUN says: "It is the Romance that thrills through these pages. The episodes on the plantation, in British Headquarters and at the Old Mill fairly reek with the atmosphere of Romantic drama. The story may be appraised as one of first-rate quality that will give its readers the reward of dipping once more into that rose-tinted world where Romance glorifies everything."

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works in the series. There have already been issued, we believe, three volumes. These are "Jacquon, the Rebel," by Eugene Le Roy, "Two Buds of the Seine," by Fernand Vanderme, and the present work.

"None" or "Love and the Soil" was written nearly a score of years ago and attracted much attention of its appearance in France. It is a tale of peasant life in the wine-growing districts of Burgundy and may be described as thoroughly rural, but it is not merely a story of love-making but deals with nearly all the varied passions of human life in their simplest and unadorned forms and is richly illumined with the native wit and wisdom of the peasantry of France. It, with its companion volumes in the series, is a most interesting and useful study in the life of the people of the regions of France which have been neglected by novelists, to whom France means Paris.

Swedish Charles

The Romance of "A Name at Which the World Grew Pale"

KINGS-AT-ARMS. By Margare Bowen. 12mo. pp. 312. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Miss Bowen—or shall we call her Signorina Costanzo?—has adopted a very different method of writing which we must regard with intense interest, and with increasing confidence, since in the present work she develops it markedly than ever before and produces on the whole the most satisfactory results which she has thus far attained—which is saying a great deal in view of the admirable quality of her former writings. Many—not one of two extremes. They either seek to reproduce the "atmosphere" and speak of old times, or they seek to make their stories seem antiquated and remote from present human interest, or they so strongly "modernize" them as to destroy all the historical illusion and to make their characters appear like mudmen.

In "Kings-at-Arms" we have an illustration of finely successful avoidance of both these extremes. Charles XII, Augustus, Peter the Great and their contemporaries and companions, are not made to act and talk as does the ghost of a dead man, but they are, day by day, but neither are they more, they are in a museum of antiquities. They belong to their own age, but their own age is made to seem essentially like our own, save for the color of their skin and the shape of their noses.

There may be, and indeed we think that there is, ground for doubting the historical accuracy of the author's portrayal of Charles's personal character and manners at the very beginning of the story. It seems scarcely possible that a prince who had been as carefully brought up by a king's father as had been could be such a drunken boor. But with the narrative thereafter as a whole we can find no fault. Indeed, we might call it a historical romance but a romantic history. There is woven into it a most effective drama of love. But the essential facts of the story are set down with the literal truth of an encyclopedia article. They are told so much as to make us feel that we are reading the accomplished author the more as a novelist or historian. As both she is altogether charming.

Among the Stricken

Tales Full of Human Sympathy and Interest

HOSPITAL STORIES. By Mary Roberts Rinehart. 12mo. pp. 260. The George H. Doran Company.

None can read Mary Roberts Rinehart without feeling two distinct thrills of amazement—one that so prolific a writer should so constantly strike twelve, and second, even more astonishing, that she could be so versatile. She has given some of the best mystery stories that have been written. She has depicted three spinners who will remain immortal in fiction. Her novel of war ranks high among the enormous output of such works. And now, when we are satiated with war facts and fiction, and are wondering if the flood of good and bad material which has been dammed on a long-suffering public will ever cease, Mrs. Rinehart comes with a book of delightful stories, the scene of each of which is in a hospital, not behind the lines in France or Flanders, but anywhere in America—a book throbbing with the pulsation of humanity's battle, in which the historic conflict which has been raging in Europe is hardly mentioned.

It is difficult to choose the best story in the collection, although we believe that the last one, "The Miracle," is a tale which might have had its inception in the woman's night court, and is wonderfully not sentimental, delightfully told, realistic, yet clean and with a satisfactory and yet perfectly logical ending. The "miracle" is a motherhood, and to poor Clara it comes outside a window, but it is because life has taught "Liz" and the little nurse each different phases of what we call love that they are wondering if Clara's problem for her and bring to her a really "happy ending" to her difficulties.

"God's Fool" deals with much the same problem from a different angle, but while it is interesting, it does not seem to us as good a story. The first story in the book, "Jane," is extremely sympathetic, and thousands of Jane's to be seen on Fifth Avenue every bright, sunny afternoon. We are of opinion, however, that the "red-haired person" difficulties did not end at the altar, but that she had from a dull life to the end of her days with Jane at the helm. Evidently Jane's father shared this opinion; but then, he was a name.

"In the Pavilion" is written around an exceedingly old theme, but in such a skilful manner and with such springing of old new twists and turns in story telling that it hardly seems

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thrilling, and yet there is not one of them of which we are prepared to say that it could not happen in New York or which indeed seems incongruous with the multifarious opportunities and vicissitudes of the city.

Besides the entrancing interest of the tale, we must be profoundly grateful for the medium of expression. Mr. Stringer knows how to write.—N. Y. Tribune.

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about to elope. Just why, except for the purpose of furthering the story, no one can guess, for their finances have not taken any turn for the better since the husband's discovery. The wife steals out at midnight to meet and depart with her lover. The husband also keeps the trust. The wife is found murdered in the summer house outside of town. The story is scheduled to take place. A niece sees the husband leaves the house, so early in the story there is no doubt of his having been out on the night of the tragedy. True, the device is used of having him make two trips, a most unlikely occurrence under the circumstances, which adds a very small bit of mystery to the story, but it is one very much. There were obviously only two persons present on the occasion when the woman was murdered. The lover was, of course, not a single motive in the world for killing her. Voila tout! The solution is as difficult as if its answer were a prelude to enable the solver to buy a piano at a need state, and the ordinary reader is supposed to be moderately intelligent at least.

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